

times. President Lincoln said, "We cannot escape our history." We cannot escape our future, either. And that future must be one in which every American has the chance to live up to his or her God-given capacities.

The new technology, the instant communications, the explosion of global commerce have created enormous opportunities and enormous anxieties for Americans. In the last 2½ years, we have seen 7 million new jobs, more millionaires and new businesses than ever before, high corporate profits, and a booming stock market. Yet, most Americans are working harder for the same or lower pay, and they feel more insecurity about their jobs, their retirement, their health care, and their children's education. Too many of our children are clearly exposed to poverty and welfare, violence and drugs.

These are the great challenges for our whole country on the homefront at the dawn of the 21st century. We've got to find the wisdom and the will to create family-wage jobs for all the people who want to work, to open the door of college to all Americans, to strengthen families and reduce the awful problems to which our children are exposed, to move poor Americans from welfare to work.

This is the work of our administration, to give people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives, to give families and communities the tools they need to solve their own problems. But let us not forget affirmative action didn't cause these problems. It won't solve them. And getting rid of affirmative action certainly won't solve them.

If properly done, affirmative action can help us come together, go forward, and grow together. It is in our moral, legal, and practical interest to see that every person can make the most of his own life. In the fight for the future, we need all hands on deck, and some of those hands still need a helping hand.

In our national community we're all different; we're all the same. We want liberty and freedom. We want the embrace of family and community. We want to make the most of our own lives, and we're determined to give our children a better one. Today there are voices of division who would say forget all that. Don't you dare. Remember we're

still closing the gap between our Founders' ideals and our reality. But every step along the way has made us richer, stronger, and better. And the best is yet to come.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in the Rotunda. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, USA, Chief of Staff, Army.

## **Memorandum on Affirmative Action** *July 19, 1995*

*Memorandum for Heads of Executive  
Departments and Agencies*

*Subject: Evaluation of Affirmative Action  
Programs*

This Administration is committed to expanding the economy, to strengthening programs that support children and families, and to vigorous, effective enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination. These commitments reflect bedrock values—equality, opportunity, and fair play—which extend to all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

While our Nation has made enormous strides toward eliminating inequality and barriers to opportunity, the job is not complete. As the United States Supreme Court recognized only one month ago in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*. "[t]he unhappy persistence of both the practice and the lingering effects of racial discrimination against minority groups in this country is an unfortunate reality, and government is not disqualified from acting in response to it." This Administration will continue to support affirmative measures that promote opportunities in employment, education, and government contracting for Americans subject to discrimination or its continuing effects. In every instance, we will seek reasonable ways to achieve the objectives of inclusion and anti-discrimination without specific reliance on group membership. But where our legitimate objectives cannot be achieved through such means, the Federal Government will continue to support lawful consideration of race, ethnicity, and gender under programs that are flexible, realistic, subject to reevaluation, and fair.

Accordingly, in all programs you administer that use race, ethnicity, or gender as a consideration to expand opportunity or provide benefits to members of groups that have suffered discrimination, I ask you to take steps to ensure adherence to the following policy principles. The policy principles are that any program must be eliminated or reformed if it:

- (a) creates a quota;
- (b) creates preferences for unqualified individuals;
- (c) creates reverse discrimination; or
- (d) continues even after its equal opportunity purposes have been achieved.

In addition, the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña* requires strict scrutiny of the justifications for, and provisions of, a broad range of existing race-based affirmative action programs. You recently received a detailed legal analysis of *Adarand* from the Department of Justice. Consistent with that guidance, I am today instructing each of you to undertake, in consultation with and pursuant to the overall direction of the Attorney General, an evaluation of programs you administer that use race or ethnicity in decision making. With regard to programs that affect more than one agency, the Attorney General shall determine, after consultations, which agency shall take the lead in performing this analysis.

Using all of the tools at your disposal, you should develop any information that is necessary to evaluate whether your programs are narrowly tailored to serve a compelling interest, as required under *Adarand*'s strict scrutiny standard. Any program that does not meet the constitutional standard must be reformed or eliminated.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Satellite Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the National Council of La Raza**

*July 19, 1995*

**The President.** Thank you, Irma Flores Gonzalez, for that warm introduction, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your warm welcome.

I'm glad to see so many of my friends out there, and I want to say a special hello to your president, Raul Yzaguirre, and Irma's predecessor, Dr. Audrey Alvarado. The First Lady sends her regrets at not being able to be with you today. I hope you won't be too disappointed that I'm going to be her stand-in. I'm also sorry I can't be with you in person, as I was last year in Miami.

Just a little over an hour ago, at the National Archives here in Washington, I announced the results of our administration's review of Federal affirmative action programs and my convictions about what we ought to do with affirmative action. I made it clear that an essential part of our search for common ground in the exercise of our freedom is an unwavering commitment to genuine equal opportunity for all Americans. Affirmative action is simply a tool in the pursuit of that enduring national interest, equal opportunity.

Hispanics are making huge strides in ways we cannot have even imagined just a generation ago. I don't want any Hispanic child in America to feel that his or her race is an impediment to full achievement. Every child has a right to the American dream, and all of us have a responsibility to nourish that dream.

But until this country has achieved equality of opportunity, until we have stamped out discrimination, we will still need the remedy of affirmative action. It must be done the right way: It must be flexible; it must be fair; and it must work. Let me be clear: Our administration is against quotas; we're against guaranteed results; but we do need to guarantee genuine equality of opportunity for all Americans.

We want to support the programs that are working, and we want to get rid of the ones that aren't. If you ask me in a sentence what we need to do, I'd say we need to mend but not to end affirmative action. We ought to stay with our principles and fix whatever practices we need to fix.

Our study showed that, indeed, affirmative action has been an effective tool in expanding opportunity for those who have suffered discrimination, in the Army, in education, in small business loans, in employment by Federal contractors, in the set-aside programs.